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The President's Daily Brief

December 31, 1974

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PORTUGAL

Voter registration in Portugal, which began early this month, is proceeding smoothly. Technical problems may delay the election of the constituent assembly next spring, but only for two or three weeks. The Portuguese Communists--perhaps sensing that they will not do well in the election--have charged that the registration process is being sabotaged in some rural provinces. They have been urging that the election be delayed for an indefinite period.

A government spokesman has stated that no irregularities have been discovered, and both the Socialist and Popular Democratic parties have deplored any effort to delay or to cast doubt on the validity of the elections.

The communists suffered a setback last week when the Superior Council of the Armed Forces--a group of 20 top leaders of the Armed Forces Movement--re-emphasized that the Movement is not aligned with any political group. Both the Portuguese Communist Party and the communist-dominated Portuguese Democratic Movement have tried to convince the public that they are closely allied with the Armed Forces Movement.

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NOTES

Greece *withdraws a top combat unit from the Turkish border, where it had been posted last July at the peak of the Cyprus crisis.*

The US consul in Thessaloniki has reported seeing medium and heavy artillery pieces, tanks and trucks, probably belonging to the 20th Armored Division, moving away from the frontier, presumably toward the unit's peacetime location in Thessaloniki.

* * *

Japan *finds its four-year shipbuilding boom has subsided.*

The oil crunch has particularly affected orders for tankers, which have accounted for about 80 percent of the tonnage ordered from Japanese yards. In all, during the first three quarters of 1974, Japan has received only 25 percent of worldwide orders for ship construction compared with 60 percent during the comparable period the preceding year.

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